

AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICE, UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

OBEDIENCE DO'S AND DON'T'S FOR BEGINNING DOG TRAINING

To get the best results and to accomplish the most in training, certain do's and don't's must be followed. The most helpful of these are:

(1) DO play with the dog - this may be before and after each training period and between the exercises, BUT when working be earnest and let the dog know it is serious business. Never laugh at the dog's antics nor tease him in a joking way.

(2) AT FIRST train five to fifteen minutes twice a day. Gradually increase the training periods to a half an hour and, if possible, train more frequently rather than for a long period of time. Do not train immediately after a dog has eaten a hearty meal. In hot weather, be considerate of the dog by working him during the coolest part of the day.

(3) BE CONSISTENT. So as not to confuse the dog, always use the same words and give the same signals. Never say "Jester, come" then "Jester, come over here," and then "Jester, here,". Repeat the same command or signal until the dog obeys either one. Since dogs learn more quickly through what they see than through what they hear, signals constitute about 75 per cent of the dog's training and the voice about 25 per cent.

(4) BE PATIENT. The dog can absorb just so much at a time, so training must be taken slowly. The trainer must not move on to a new lesson until all preceding ones are thoroughly understood.

(5) VARY THE SEQUENCE OF THE WORK. He should look forward to his training with eagerness and not act like a puppet on the end of a leash. BE FIRM WITH GENTLENESS. Even if it is necessary to stay half an hour longer at a particular exercise.

(6) If the owner feels himself losing his temper, that particular training session should be discontinued. The trainer should see that the dog is in a happy frame of mind at the close of each training period. If the dog is given something pleasant to remember, he will anxiously await the next session.

(7) Don't expect a miracle. A dog will learn certain exercises in a short time, but it may take several weeks to steady him, (that is, to establish him in his performance). A gradual improvement over a long period will give the best results.

(8) Keep the hands off the dog as much as possible while training. Use the training collar for all corrections. Constant grabbing will cause the dog to shy away.

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(9) If a dog fails to perform a given exercise, go back to the beginning and start over again. A good trainer is never afraid to review the work.

(10) Do not make a practice of rewarding a dog with food. A tidbit is all right to overcome certain training problems, but the dog should learn to work because he is asked to, and his reward should be a word of praise and a loving pat.

(11) Remember that kindness will accomplish much more than harshness and cruelty. A dog has a wonderful memory, and he won't forget one's attitude toward him.

(12) Use the dog's name as little as possible. Stress the words that make up the commands for each exercise. When a dog's name is repeated too frequently, he becomes uncertain and makes more mistakes than ever.

(13) At first one person should do the training. A dog should have his own vocabulary. "No," "down," "come," "all right," "good boy," "bad dog," and many other words should have a definite meaning.

(14) Never punish a dog by striking him in temper. By the tone of voice and a sharp jerk on the collar he can be made to understand that he has done something displeasing.

(15) Do not punish a dog unless he knows what he is being punished for. The dog has no way of letting the trainer know that things have not been made clear to him.

(16) Use a firm tone of voice at all times.

(17) In training, use only a plain slip collar, not a spike collar, the dog will be a happier worker and the owner will have every reason to be proud of his accomplishments. Training collars should be used only while training or under your supervision.

SPECIAL RULES FOR CLASS WORK

- (1) Keep dogs on short leash away from other dogs.
- (2) Never allow dog to sniff, bark, lunge at people or other dogs.
- (3) Concentrate on your dog! (You are not here to visit)
- (4) Listen to your instructor!
- (5) Clean up after your dog if he has an accident.
- (6) Come to class even if dog is in season or sick - you will not be counted absent.
- (7) Use proper choke chain and lead for training - all other collars, tags, etc. are to be off dog during training and class. (If in doubt - consult teacher)
- (8) On the day the class meets, do not feed your dog less than 8 hours before class time.
- (9) Wear comfortable clothing that is suitable - slacks for women and rubber-heeled shoes are desired.